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ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
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FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6768  
INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 2436  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 8483  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 3008  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 2893

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 002324

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN, DRL/IRF, INR/REA, INR/B

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KIRF](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW STATE ADVISOR ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS BAKHROM  
ABDUKHALIMOV

REF: A. TASHKENT 2280  
[1](#)B. TASHKENT 2317

Classified By: AMB. JON R. PURNELL, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Bakhrom Abdukhalimov has been appointed State Advisor to the President for Religious Affairs and Interethnic Relations. Abdukhalimov is an expert in Arabic and Islamic Studies. He has spent much of his career at the Al Beruni Oriental Studies Research Institute under the Academy of Sciences. In January 2005 he visited Seattle for ten days with a delegation of Uzbek university officials. His service as an interpreter for Soviet diplomatic and military missions in Yemen and Libya during the 1980s may indicate that he is a former GRU (Main Intelligence Department) officer. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On December 4, Bakhrom Abdukhalimov was appointed State Advisor to the President for Religious Affairs and Interethnic Relations (ref A). He replaces Shoazim Minovarov, who became Deputy Foreign Minister responsible for the Middle East and Africa (ref B). Abdukhalimov is a specialist in Arabic and Oriental Studies. In 1981 he graduated with a degree in Arabic Philology from Tashkent State University's Faculty of Oriental Studies. He earned a doctorate in history in 2002.

[1](#)3. (C) Abdukhalimov has long-standing ties to the Al Beruni Oriental Studies Research Institute under the Academy of Sciences, serving as its director (2004-2006), research fellow and science officer (1990-2002) and junior research fellow (1985 to 1987). The Al Beruni Institute, along with other Islamic institutes in Tashkent, has received financial support from the Department of State. It has also had a cooperation agreement with the University of Washington. In January 2005, Abdukhalimov participated in a ten-day visit to Seattle as part of a delegation of rectors of Uzbek Universities. From 2002 to 2004 he was Vice Rector of Westminster International University in Tashkent, a British affiliated institution offering degrees in business, economics, and law.

[1](#)4. (C) His diplomatic assignments in the Middle East during the Soviet period indicate that he could have been a GRU (Main Intelligence Department) officer. From 1987 to 1990 he was an interpreter for the Soviet military mission in Yemen, and from 1981 to 1983 was an interpreter at the Soviet mission in Libya. From 1983 to 1985 he served in the Ministry of Agriculture's Department for International Scientific and Technology Relations. Abdukhalimov, an ethnic Uzbek, was born in Tashkent on February 27, 1959.

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: Abdukhalimov's cooperation with the

University of Washington while at the Al Beruni Institute could be a positive factor in shaping his attitude towards the U.S. We do not yet know, however, if he will maintain the excellent relations Post enjoyed with his predecessor, Minovarov (ref B). Abdukhalimov's service abroad suggests he may have had some connection with intelligence services. If so, his appointment would be consistent with a well-established trend of NSS officers landing high-level positions within the GOU.

PURNELL